

# Konkow Maidu Tribal Presence in the Lake Oroville Area:



## *An Ethnographic and Ethnohistoric Inventory*



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This ethnographic and ethnohistoric inventory of Konkow Maidu cultural resources was conducted under the auspices of the State of California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for the Oroville Facilities Relicensing FERC Project No. 2100 in Butte County in order to meet regulatory requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). It has been carried out collaboratively with the Maidu Advisory Council (MAC), which includes members of five local Konkow Maidu Tribes, as well as with participation from individual members of these Tribes. It has also been a collaborative effort with the Cultural Resources Work Group (CRWG), which is composed of interested members of the local Oroville community; the CRWG was established for the Alternative Licensing Procedures (ALP) and it has defined a number of issues for the cultural resources studies to examine. Thanks to Janis Offermann of DWR for her help and guidance with this project. This report presents the preliminary findings of the ethnographic/ethnohistoric study.

Oroville Facilities Relicensing FERC Project 2100

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# What is Ethnography? What is Ethnohistory?

“Ethno-” means “a People or Nation,” and “-graphy” pertains to something written or described; thus an *ethnography* is a written description of the culture and lifeways of a particular People, in this case the Konkow Maidu of the Oroville area. Generally speaking, it presents a view of the culture and how the people conduct their lives within a particular time period. An ethnography often conveys a certain sense of the “traditional,” timeless past, which for California Indians is the time prior to contact with EuroAmerican colonists. This perspective tends to leave out the many significant events and circumstances resulting from colonization and the ensuing clash of Peoples. An *ethnohistory*, on the other hand, discusses the history of a People, presented as a series of events across time, which have involved and affected that Nation or Tribe. In this view, the many upheavals of the contact period come into focus and contemporary issues can be considered. Taken together, Ethnography and Ethnohistory can present a more complete picture.

## *What is an Ethnographic Inventory?*

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 requires federal agencies such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which licenses, inspects, and oversees environmental matters for hydro-electric projects, to consider if and how operations at the Oroville Facilities affect culturally sensitive sites within the project area. The first step in the investigation is to survey and identify the cultural resources within the affected zone. An Ethnographic Inventory is one of the required studies, and it focuses on the identification and location of places that are of cultural importance to the local People—for the Oroville Facilities this means the local Konkow Maidu Tribes. It is accomplished by surveying (examining) the appropriate evidence, which results in an inventory or list of places distributed across the landscape. Such an inventory is called an ethnogeography—a geography of the People. Ideally, the locations can be matched with the names originally given by the indigenous residents of the area. In this case it would be correlating locations with their Maidu language names. Such names imbue the landscape with cultural meaning and value and indicate which places are important to the community. These names can explicitly identify the kinds of activities that take place in particular locations. Many named locations are residential sites; some are ceremonial sites; and others are critical to subsistence. Still others are trails, reflecting how the larger community is interconnected, merging at nexus points where impor-